the matter? Ain't you going to marry me? Is that what you mean?"

"No—I ain't. I ain't never going to marry anybody!"

She ducked under his arm and ran, fleeing as from pursuit—though Billy, after staring a few moments toward her retreating figure as it bounded over tracks and gutter, turned and went back to the bench, letting himself slowly down on it and dropping his head in his hands.

She saw him sitting there as she turned in at the door of the house. There was no impulse to return to him. She was numb, unable to think or feel. So far as she had any impulse, she wanted only to crawl back safe into the old, unlovely life of her childhood. Groping toward this, she wondered if Jess needed her.

SHE hurried past the Durgan landing, out of breath, and stopped panting a moment before pushing the bell of her sister's flat.

Her hand was out for this purpose when the door opened quietly and showed Carl there in shirt and trousers, his hair sticking up over his head. He looked tired but triumphant.

"*Ssst!*" he whispered. "Don't you make no noise."

"Why?"

"Jess's asleep."

"Jess?"

"Ye-ah." His broad, shiny, blond face looked more animated than Teresa had ever seen it. The loquacity of achievement seemed to come upon him. "I put her asleep," he grinned. "Doc give the kid some'n an' *he* slep'—an' then Jess couldn't."

"You put her to sleep?" Teresa wondered.

"Rocked her an' sung to her." The brother-in-law nodded happily. "Say—you oughter heard me! She's asleep. Want to come in an' look at her? You darst if you tiptoe."

Teresa stared, trying to adjust something in her own mind.

"I guess I'll go downstairs, if you don't need me," she said dully.

She went on dragging feet.

It was so quiet at her own door that, but for the strip of light under it, Teresa would have believed her father and mother asleep. She touched the knob. No sound. She turned it and went in.

Mrs. Durgan was changing the dressing on the felon—always a somewhat desperate adventure. Durgan's teeth were locked, but the opening door startled him into letting slip a groan.

"Did I hurt ye? I'm doin' my best. It's 'bout through"—anxiously—"if ye can just stand it a minute more."

"'Twasn't you," Durgan gritted out. "'S got to hurt 'bout so bad. 'Druther have you fix it than the doc."

"It'll feel better now for a while," comforted Mrs. Durgan. "That stuff always does seem to ease it up for a spell."

Durgan relaxed in his chair with an expulsion of the breath he had been holding.

"'S gittin' a leetle easier, I b'lieve. You go on, Teressy, an' have some rest. You look beat out."

Teresa had started forward as her father called her name. She dropped back a pace as she remembered that it was her mother's also. She recognized, with some newly awakened understanding, that he only pronounced it that way when it meant the wife.

"Oh, I'm all right." Mrs. Durgan was waddling toward the kitchen door. "I ain't tired. I got a lot of things out here to do."

Teresa, following the familiar slogan of work, found the small kitchen grotesquely decorated with Durgan's clothing, laid out to mend.

"Want me to help you, maw?"

"No; I can 'tend to 'em."

The tone held a sort of jealousy, as if Mrs. Durgan felt the need of expressing herself by means of stitches. She threaded a needle, hunted out a patch, and snipped it into shape, before she seemed to notice her daughter.

"What you lookin' at, Tressy?"

"Nothin'."

There was no use for Teresa to attempt to tell her mother what it was she saw as she gazed at the shapeless figure and pudgy fingers, the graying hair and sweating face.

"Well, ye needn't stand staring at me as if I was a show," Mrs. Durgan admonished. "Didn't ye never see me mend yer paw's shirts before? It ain't any special sight, is it? Whad ye want, anyhow?"

"Why won't you let me help you do that?"

Teresa felt as if a world's ransom hung on the reply to her question.

"Because I'd ruther do it myself," grunted Mrs. Durgan. "Because nobody but me ever could set a patch to please yer paw."

Still the girl stood. Her mother seemed to have forgotten her. The bungling patch that nobody else could set to please Durgan was going on with a good will. The first faint rasp as of some one sawing a board sounded from the inner room.

"For any sakes, don't wake yer paw—he's dropped off now," Mrs. Durgan cautioned, as the girl wheeled and ran.

"I left somethin'—on a bench—down in the square. I got to go back for it," cried Teresa.

GETTING down the stairs was fairly swift, though it seemed to Teresa that their number was doubled. The street was emptier than when she had left it a few moments before. Would Billy be gone? No; some one was sitting in the same spot on the bench, his head still in his hands. She ran for fear he would get up and go away before she could reach him. Love and terror, and something older and stronger than either, winged her feet.

"Oh—Billy!"

"Tress!"

A moment they stood, trembling toward each other. Then, with a single movement, Teresa crossed the frontier upon which she had hesitated, and entered fully that World of Other Estimates, never again quite to forget her citizenship in it. For a time there was no need of words.

After a while the young fellow raised his head to say:

"What made you run away from me that way, Tress—and then come back?"

The language of this new place Teresa was in, is not words. She put up a hand against her lover's cheek for answer; she offered her lips in reply. Yet, so do old habits and beliefs cling that, when he had kissed her again, she made some effort to put her explanation into speech. It broke down, crumbled into foolish little endearments, before it had more than mentioned that Jess's baby was better, and gone off sidewise into the apparently irrelevant statement that she wished he'd read that liburry book about Gladyse St. Albans.

THE noise of the mechanical piano at the upper end of the square was music, the trolley rounding the corner a car of light, the policeman pacing his beat a friendly presence. And over all the high, black night sky, studded with immemorial stars, sheltered and kept them.

Billy hunted in his pocket for the ring. With closed eyes she pushed her hand toward him. With rapture she felt the circlet slip on. Nothing new had happened. It was not that she expected her lot to be different from that of Jess, or even her mother. Pain ambushed the path ahead. She would meet disillusion, loss. But a ray of illumination had been vouchsafed. In this light she could see Billy and marriage, and what might come with them, a woman's heritage,—deep, true, satisfying,—ordained from the foundations of time.

The Girl of the Nutmeg Isle

By BEATRICE GRIMSHAW

Illustration by Harvey T. Dunn

Before you read this instalment, turn to "One Minute with the Editor," on page 2

AT Friedrich Wilhelmshaven we were able to make immediate arrangements for our voyage to the islands lying north of New Britain. Ethnological research was supposed to be the object of our trip. In reality, it was to be the wildest, most dangerous and delightful pirate picnic that ever gladdened the heart of an adventurous youth.

This seemed to me the kind of thing I had come out to see. I had honestly done my work for Gore through all our journeying; nevertheless, the secretary business had been against the grain. In my secret heart I thought it an amazing thing that a jolly, splendid fellow like Red Bob should care for such musty stuff as ethnology, while there was a gun left in the world to shoot with or an island to explore. I am older now; I understand that the study of ethnology was simply Red Bob's spiritual tobacco. Every man, it seems, must have spiritual tobacco of some kind, when he is past the age that needs no narcotic. Things happen to people as life goes on,—horrible things, mostly,—and, though the things pass over, the memory does not. That is where the tobacco comes in—the interest or pursuit that keeps a man from thinking.

ONLY one thing troubled me in those delightful hours of preparing for our adventure—the fact that I had heard nothing more of Isola. If she had stowed away on the *Afzelia*, she kept herself invisible and no one suspected it. If she was still in Rabaul, she was in good hiding. German New Guinea was of the opinion that she had either drowned herself or run away into the bush—which would come to the same in the end. A launch had come through from Rabaul on the day of our arrival, bringing no news of the bride, but reporting the bridegroom as half distracted, and searching every gully and old volcano cup about the capital with teams of plantation boys, spurred on by the promise of big rewards. If I had not trusted Red Bob as I trusted no one else on earth, I should have gone out of my mind with anxiety. But I was as certain that Red Bob could put his finger on the missing bride, when he liked, as I was sure of the sun rising in the morning.

Next day we sailed out of Friedrich Wilhelmshaven harbor. I could have sung for delight.

"It's beginning at last," I kept saying to myself, as our little schooner flew through the water under a heavy breeze, heading toward all the smaller, unnamed islands that tangle themselves about the end of New Britain.

What "it" might be I did not specify.

But everything on board the schooner was "it." The Winchester rifles slung on the bulkheads of the tiny cabin, the outfit of long bush-knife, cartridge-belt, and .48 Colt revolvers, in a leather holster, worn by Gore and myself, the crew, naked New Britainers with fierce bison eyes glowing under bison-like shocks of hair, the wild, wonderful ranges of New Guinea that opened out behind us as we sailed—the scarcely charted ocean—even the narrowness and inconvenience of the little *Cecilie* after all those months of luxurious travel on great steamers.

Red Bob was captain, and I was mate, of this little cockle-shell, manned by black savages who had eaten human flesh, and were doubtless ready to do so again if the chance presented itself. We were tossing about on an ocean of which no good charts were to be had. We were going to unknown islands, which we had to find for ourselves. Our food was tinned and bagged stuff from Friedrich Wilhelmshaven, to be cooked by Bo in a galley like a sentry-box.

Yes, undoubtedly "it" had begun.

OUR native crew, though the roughest of savages, had had some teaching from white men, and could handle a boat well enough. We let them run the *Cecilie* that morning, Red Bob and I steering by turns. While one held the wheel the other stood alongside, and, safe from all possible overhearing, we reveled—at least, I can answer for myself—in being able to speak loudly and freely of our plans. It was true that most of the crew knew pidgin-English, but the following of a connected conversation in ordinary language is not within the New Britain native's powers.

"First," said Red Bob, standing with bare feet apart on the deck, and leaning to the *Cecilie's* heavy list, as he turned the wheel in his hands, "we go to the island where the inscription is. I've got the bearings of the arrow, but I must see it again, to avoid any possibility of mistake. After that we make for Schouten's pearl island as quick as we can go. Then—we shall see."

"How are you going to get the pearls?" I asked.

The huge coast-line of New Guinea was fading behind us into the pale, thin blue of distance. Ahead, bright islands, purple as wisteria flowers, were pricking up out of the sea. A December squall of fierce, hot rain had just swept over us; the decks were wet and shining; and over to windward the sea was silver with new sun.

Red Bob laughed.

"You may well ask," he said. "You don't suppose one could bring diving gear through the customs at Friedrich Wilhelmshaven or Rabaul, without questions being asked that would be pretty hard to answer."

"No," I said. "And, by the way, suppose we get it all right, aren't we pearl-poaching?"

"Oh, yes," said Gore, laughing till his eyes were nothing but two blue slits in a mass of wrinkles. "You may certainly call it that. Pearl-poaching and smuggling are about the two forms of dishonesty that you may commit without being dishonest. It's up to you not to get caught, that's all. Well, about the diving gear. It's down in the hold, labeled 'Trade goods.' A friend of mine managed that for me at Friedrich Wilhelmshaven. Same friend who got me the boys."

"Are they safe?" I asked.

"Reasonably so," said Gore. "I've done what I can. Couldn't get quite all of them from separate districts, but three out of the five are strangers to one another. All the same, sleep with your belt on, and overhaul your pistol now and then. This climate's the deuce on gunnery. I don't know that I admire that automatic of yours. They're a little too fine for these equatorial countries. Have known 'em jam."

"Not mine," I said. "It's looked after, and I can shoot to a hair with it. I can't do with that beastly kicking old navy pattern."

"It has its points," said Gore. We talked no more for a while.

The *Cecilie*, like Gore's revolver, had